



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PHOTO

Discover Your Northwest (DYNW) Executive Director Jim Adams (left) and board member Christy McDanold (right) talk with Seattle District Commander Col. Mark Gerald in the Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden. DYNW received the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2018 Excellence in Partnerships Award as a key partner of the district's Hiram M. Chittenden Locks.

PARTNERSHIPS KEY TO REACHING GOALS

BY BILL DOWELL, Seattle District

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Hiram M. Chittenden Locks, locally known as the Ballard Locks, are one of Seattle's top tourist destinations.

Each year, hundreds of thousands flock to the more-than-a-century-old locks to wander atop the gates and lock walls, marveling at the engineering feat and watching vessels transit from the fresh waters of lakes Washington and Union to Puget Sound's salt waters, and back. They visit the fish ladder to view salmon migration, and walk among plants from around the world in the Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden.

"It truly is a magical place to visit," said Discover Your Northwest (DYNW) Executive Director Jim Adams. "It holds a special place in my heart."

DYNW and Adams have been key partners at the locks for decades. The Seattle-based nonprofit was selected for the USACE 2018 Excellence in Partnerships Award. "It is without question [that] their contributions have helped make the Ballard Locks a top Seattle

destination spot," said District Partnership Program Manager Alana Mesenbrink.

The large nonprofit serves more than just USACE facilities in the Pacific Northwest and operates in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, and Montana. It serves national park sites, national forests, and many others. Yet, according to Mesenbrink, DYNW dedicates time and energy to each project as if it were its only partnership.

Adams was personally involved in supporting nine months of special activities held in 2017 for the locks centennial commemoration. DYNW was the first partner, and Adams was a key member on the centennial planning team.

Even while the centennial festivities were going on, Adams and another partner, the Corps Foundation, and its founding director, Rich Deline, were working on the next project at the locks: a \$1 million fish ladder viewing area renovation.

NORTHWESTERN DIVISION

“It’s been nearly 50 years since the fish ladder was updated, and the current exhibits and space [are] simply worn out and out of date,” said Deline.

USACE’s natural resource management mission needs these types of collaboration, according to Mesenbrink. The challenges facing this mission require a new way of doing business to ensure USACE is meeting public needs.

“Our partners and volunteers are organizations and people who want to give back to their communities and are interested in being involved in the Corps’ natural resource management

program,” Mesenbrink said. “While not a substitute for Corps’ resource management, they help accomplish programs and activities when funding isn’t available and wouldn’t normally be performed.”

The value of the partnerships is more than just about money. “It’s about building community support and constituencies,” she continued. “Whether it is an environmental ethic, a love of parks, or enthusiasm for the outdoors, these partners and volunteers share their expertise, resources, time, and energy to work together toward common goals.” ■

INDUSTRY DAYS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESSES LARGE AND SMALL

BY JOE SAXON, Walla Walla District

The Walla Walla District is open for business. Expanding opportunities for American business is one of the goals of the district’s annual community engagement program, and each fall, Industry Day is a big part of that effort.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Walla Walla District hosted more than 130 business owners during its Industry Day in October 2018 in Walla Walla, Washington.

The daylong event was open to those interested in learning about how to do business with USACE, upcoming contract opportunities, competing for contracts, or showcasing capabilities.

“We hold these types of events to provide our customers, stakeholders, the public, and large and small businesses the best opportunities to learn how to work with and for the federal government. This in turn becomes a true value to our nation and our communities,” said Lt. Col. Christian Dietz, commander of Walla Walla District.

District personnel presented informational briefings and discussed upcoming contracting opportunities and processes, and a panel of district staff members, who are frequently involved with reviewing contract proposals, answered a wide variety of questions posed by attendees.

The district is responsible for managing environmental, hydroelectric, navigation, engineering, construction, emergency management, and recreation services within a region covering 107,000 square miles that includes parts of six states. The Walla Walla District operates and maintains six hydroelectric power facilities, four flood risk reduction projects, and \$2.5 billion of infrastructure.

For many attendees, Industry Day offered the chance to network with other businesses that do work for USACE.

“We are a small business in the area, but this is our first time to Industry Day,” said Adam Swedberg, owner of Swedberg Contracting.

“I received a lot of really valuable information and was able to network with some of the local large businesses that came out. We weren’t sure what to expect, but after attending, we have a better idea of how the process works and how to navigate it,” Swedberg explained.

That small business-to-large business networking can be key to successful federal contract performance.

“Large businesses, which have capacity to perform complex, high-value work, often subcontract with small businesses to perform portions of [the] total scope of work. This event also allows small businesses and large businesses that work with, or plan to work with, the government to network, share information, and ask imperative questions to the Corps, sparking and promoting economic viability,” Dietz said.

“This is my first Industry Day with the Corps,” said Jon Schliep, an account manager for Timken Power Systems. “I am with a large business, and my main reason for being here today is to network with local small businesses. We want to leverage their capabilities with our own staying power to see what the future could bring for the both of us.”

The Walla Walla District awards more than 1,000 contracts each year for construction projects, architect-engineering studies, and supplies and services needed to operate its facilities. These contracting opportunities annually total \$90 million to \$130 million. ■